NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

NOTES ON NEW BOOKS.

"The Correspondence and Miscellanies of the Hon. JOHN COTTON SMITH, LL.D., formerly Governor of Connecticut. With an Eulogy, pronounced before the Connecticut Historical Society, at New Haven, May 27, 1846. By the Rev. WILLIAM W. ANDREWS. New York; Harper & Brothers, 1847." 12mo., pp. 328.

In this well-executed volume we have the memorials and the selected remains, epistolary and others, of one who may be considered the last of the line of the Puritan Governors of New England; a man a little too late to have shared in the Revolutionary struggle, the *agonia*, (as the emancipated Greeks happily but scarcely more appropriately call their own bloody and unequal contest,) but filled with its best spirit, and preserving it, in its decay, against those civil corruptions, that false freedom, to which demagogues led the way, who had but little part in vindicating liberty by arms or in giving it, by wise laws and administration, the permanency of organized Government. The common descendant, through the female line, of John Cotton and of Richard Mather, (those early ornaments of the Church in Massachusetts,) and, directly, of Henry Smith, pastor of Wethersfield, (in Connecticut, 1635,) before yet that separate province was chartered, (1639,) he was, through Jerusha, the daughter of Cotton Mather, the great-grandson of that other early magnate of the faith in New England. His father, the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith, for some fifty years the minister of Sharon, (Connecticut,) bore in his patronymics the signs of his high ecclesiastical lineage. His mother, the daughter of the Rev. William Worthington, of Saybrook, was of like clerical stock; so that he could count among his ancestors no less than seven of the great clerical and learned names of early New England. The domestic influences of such a descent, the spirit of such a line, seldom fails to affect advantageously the offspring; which must, indeed, be, through some sinister cause, most unworthy, if, with the blood of the wise, the godly, the gentle, or the brave, a large part of their ideas and feelings are not transmitted to it. Accordingly, such influences did not fail in this last of the Puritan Governors. His biographer says, (p. 16:)

"His ancestral attachments were very strong; he gloried in his descent from these worthies; and, as much as any one of his time, he was controlled by their principles and actuated by their spirit. It was the great blessing of his childhood to receive his training in one of the best of the old New England households, where law stood embodied in patriarchal authority and dignity, and where Christian faith gave the key-note to the domestic harmonies; and much of the beauty and elevation of his character was doubtless owing to the pure and quickening atmosphere of his father's house. There he formed those habits of subordination and acquired that lofty self-control which distinguished his future life. No man had more of filial reverence than he: his intercourse with his parents was ever marked by a manner the most respectful, and their memory was cherished by him with the most affectionate veneration. He was one of the many proofs how much the excellence of the New England character has had its groundwork laid in the religious constitution of her families."

With these hereditary advantages, and that, apparently, of something like wealth, Mr. Smith saw the light on the 12th February, 1765, destined to preserve its gifts for above four-score years,* and at last to resign them, after many important trusts, amidst a wide and just public esteem and love, not a duty ill done, to the end, and his very health, to the seeming, almost unwasted by previous disease: a man certainly most happy in his actions and his faith: one who, to the last, held on the primitive love of his duties; lofty in his politics, austere in his religion, rigid in his morals, though not his manners; and with only this to deplore—that, amidst his own immediate happiness, he lived to see his country suffer a grievous decline of its government and fall, for many years, under the dominion of the bad and ignorant, banded together into a faction the most formidable.

Taught, first of all, (as it is so happy when children are taught,) by a mother, he afterwards passed under the care of private teachers; then entering Yale College at fifteen, he was graduated there in 1783, the year of peace with England. He immediately began the study of the law, but not upon that method so commonly seen in this country, where young gentlemen seem to think that the Humanities can be of no use to one at the Bar, and that to get up the hill of the Law, you must slide down that of Classical Learning. Mr. Smith, on the contrary, only doubled his studies, pushed on his college course to maturer results, and qualified himself to take the degree of Master of Arts. In 1786 he was admitted to the Bar, where he soon rose to reputation and a lucrative practice. Such success leads almost always into politics. Possessed of a hereditary station in the public confidence, and meriting it not only by his talents and worth, but by manners which more than all others command a personal ascendency—manners which are at once elevated and urbane—the manners of a superior but not proud man—he seems quite early to have been called into, what he was so fitted for, public life. In 1793 he became a member of his State Legislature, and continued to serve in this until 1800, when he was transferred to the National Councils, as a member of the House of Representatives here. What the course of his public opinions and action, the following extract from the Life (pp. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25) will show:

"Mr. Smith, as might have been anticipated, early espoused the cause of the Federal Union, and supported the Administration to which the Government was first committed under the new constitution. The Revolution, while it freed the Colonies from the rule of the mother-country, left them in an enfeebled, perplexed, and almost chaotic state. They were reeling under the burden of debts incurred in the prosecution of the war; a licentious, insubordinate spirit was every where rife; insurrections were breaking out; the central government (if, by a misnomer, I may call it a government) was utterly powerless as to the collection of revenue, or the maintenance of authority; the credit of the Confederacy was gone, at home and abroad; and the faces of men began to gather blackness as they thought of the future. It was soon felt that something more than liberty, or freedom from foreign domination, was wanted; that some organific principle must be introduced to stay the process which was fast dissolving us into chaos; that a government—not a sham, but a verity—must be established, to be the central heart and the vigorous arm of the whole Confederacy, and, without impairing the reasonable liberties of the States, to be the strong and majestic representative of the national unity, and the organ of the national resources. We were in imminent danger of falling apart and being irretrievably broken, through the inordinate power of the separate sovereignties; and there was no escape but by creating a strong centripetal force in our system, which should bind every star in its harmonious orbit. The question touching the Federal Constitution was a vital one, and so the wisest statesmen felt it to be. The retrieval of our credit, the organization of our industry, the reinvigoration of the dominion of law, the awakening of hope in the hearts of the people, all depended on the establishment of a government with functions of guidance and rule, with powers not advisory but coercive, to keep every State in its rightful sphere, and thus save us from bankruptcy, dishonor, and ruin. The principles in which Mr. Smith had been educated made him the firm friend of the constitution, in which he saw the only hope of national prosperity; and he sustained with characteristic ardor and energy the party which secured its adoption. He gloried to the last in being of the school of Washington and Jay; no regard to a deteriorated public sentiment caused him to swerve one hair's breadth from his original position, or made him ashamed of the name of Federalist, with which he believed the brightest period in our annals to be indissolubly associated.

"The political character of our statesmen during most of the time that Governor Smith was in public life, was determined by the views they took of two great subjects—the Federal Union, of which I have just spoken, and the principles and policy of revolutionized France. He was in his early manhood when the revolution took place in that kingdom, and if he at first, in common with the great body of his countrymen, who could not but sympathize with the people that aided them in their perilous struggles, mistook the lurid flames of the volcano for the light of a new morning rising on the nations, it was a momentary delusion. His reverential feelings, his manly integrity, his domestic virtues, were all shocked by the atrocities of the direful tragedy which so quickly followed the dazzling play of philosophical and philanthropical fireworks. He saw the revolution to be the struggle and triumph of unbelief, the outburst and ravage of satanic pride in man, which the ordinances of society are appointed, and are, for the most part, able to restrain. Though occasioned by gross corruptions and abuses in the old institutions of the kingdom, and therefore a righteous retribution on the shepherds who had not fed the flock, he felt it to be the most atrocious revolt against the government of God, the most systematic rejection of his truth, and the most daring defiance of his authority that the world had ever seen; and he looked on the horrible cruelties and shameless indecencies which were perpetrated in its course as the legitimate fruits of its godless spirit. Liberty, of the French type, he utterly loathed; he feared the influence of France on the principles and moral feelings of his countrymen, and shrank from all intimate communion with her as from contact with a lazar-house.

"Such were his convictions early in his political life, and such they remained to the end. As he was not led astray by the false shows of liberty during the days of the Republic, neither was he dazzled by the fiery splendor of Napoleon's career; for he saw that one spirit ruled under all these outward transformations, and that the mighty monarch before whom Europe trembled was but a Jacobin on the throne. It is difficult for us of this age to make real to ourselves the intense interest, the mingled terror and exultation with which the varying aspects of French affairs were regarded, from the first breaking out of the revolution to the final catastrophe at Waterloo. Nor can the character of any statesman of that time be understood without knowing where his sympathies were in that great struggle by which all Europe was convulsed, and which constitutes a new and grand epoch in the history of Christendom. The two great parties in our country were divided upon the question: the one clung to that past of which England, as a Christian State, guarding its altars and its firesides from the slime of Jacobinism, was the representative; the other rushed towards that future which was imaged in imperial France, rising out of the abyss of the revolution, like the gorgeous palace of pandemonium. Mr. Smith went heart and hand with the former, resisting every attempt to entangle our country with French alliances, and allowing no lingering animosity towards Great Britain to blind him to the noble struggle she was making for true freedom and the Christian faith. Now that the battle with the mother-country had been fairly fought and fairly won, he was willing to let by-gones be by-gones; and he would not, in recoiling from brethren of the same race and language and religion, rush into the arms of a nation by which the truths and ordinances of Christianity had been cast off in malignant hatred and scorn. So much needed to be said to indicate and to justify Governor Smith's position as a statesman."

Such being the principles and party which Gov. Smith espoused, we need scarcely tell the further tale of his soon ceasing to attempt to uphold in Congress a fallen cause. In 1807 he accepted a seat in the judiciary of his State. Of that office he acquitted himself admirably until 1811, when he was made Lieutenant Governor. In 1812 he succeeded to the Governorship, to which he continued to be re-elected until 1817, when a radical change of the Constitution decided him to withdraw from public life.

Meantime had occurred the war of 1812, to which, though greatly opposed, it must be told to his honor that he lent his active official aid. For all that regards the particular part which he bore in it we must, however, refer to the volume.

The biography furnishes some observations on the constitutional change in Connecticut just mentioned, which are weighty and interesting:

"Governor Smith was the last Governor under the old *regime*. He went out of office in consequence of a political revolution in the State, which changed radically the spirit, and led to a speedy change in the constitution of our Commonwealth. This constitutes such an epoch in our history as to demand a moment's notice. Connecticut was planted by Christian men and on Christian principles. The grand aim of the colonists was to build up a Christian State, a system of institutions which should be as a holy temple in honor of Almighty God, founded on the recognition of his authority, reared in accordance with his will, and solemnly devoted to the glory of his name. They looked on civil government as a Divine ordinance, clothed with a majesty descended from above, not derived from beneath, and not as a mere earthly contrivance for the collection of revenue and the maintenance of an efficient police. In fleeing from the oppressions and striving to be freed from the abuses of the Old World, they did not cast away the great truth which has been the shaping law of Christendom—Christ's domain—that the anointed Son of God, from whose birth all Christian nations measure time, is the true centre of the State as of the Church, who should be recognised in every civil and ecclesiastical institution, and to whom every office-bearer owes allegiance. The magistracy had, in their view, a *jus divinum*, being the ministers of God, entrusted with the sword of justice by his authority, and responsible for the wielding of it in accordance with his righteous will. Said John Robinson, in his farewell letter to the little company of Pilgrims in the Mayflower—lambs of his own flock, who were leaving him for the wilderness: 'Lastly, whereas you are to become a body politic, using among yourselves civil government, and are not furnished with any persons of special eminency above the rest, to be by you chosen into office of government, let your wisdom and godliness appear not only in choosing such persons as do entirely love and will diligently promote the common good, but also in yielding unto them all due honor and obedience in their lawful administrations, not beholding in them the ordinances of their persons, but God's ordinance for your good; nor be like the foolish multitude, who do more honor the gay coat than either the virtuous mind of the man or glorious ordinance of the Lord. But you know better things, and that the image of the Lord's power and authority, which the magistrate beareth, is honorable, in how mean persons soever.'

"The compact drawn up by the Pilgrims before they left the ship, began, 'In the name of God, Amen,' and proceeded to declare that, having undertaken 'to plant a colony for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith, they did solemnly, in his presence, covenant and combine,' &c.

"Nor was it otherwise in Connecticut. The original constitution, drawn up January 14th, 1639, at Hartford, states in the preamble the duty of establishing 'an orderly and decent government according to God,' and that it was framed 'to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus;' nor were the fundamental articles of the colony of New Haven, which were adopted June 14th, of the same year, less explicit in the recognition of the Christian faith. Connecticut from the beginning, in both colonies,* was a Christian Commonwealth, sealed and defended with the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The State, as God's ordinance for civil rule, did not stand aloof from the church, his ordinance for teaching and worship. The one acted as the representative of Christ the King; the other as the representative of Christ the Prophet and the Priest. The State sought to guide itself by the light of God's revealed will, and acknowledged, in all reverence of spirit, his holy and overmastering providence; and hence, remembering that 'the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and that they should seek the law at his mouth,' it looked to the church to be instructed in the great principles on which Government must be administered, and sought the blessing, and deprecated the anger of the Lord, in days of fasting and prayer. It was on this ground that a sermon was preached at the opening of every session of the Legislature, that the rulers might be reminded of their obligations to God, and of their dependence on him for wisdom in counsel and rule, and not because the clergy might lawfully interfere in any of the details of the civil administration. The church was recognised by the State, and formally established and sustained as the teacher of the people.

"That our fathers mistook sometimes in the application of these principles through ignorance of the proper boundaries of these two great institutions; that they were somewhat intolerant, and gave to their polity an austere and *Jewish* character, from want of insight into the true freedom of Christianity, and the purely spiritual character of all ecclesiastical ordinances, were errors affecting the beauty and comfort of the superstructure, but not impairing the solidity of the foundation.† And I dare affirm that, in spite of all the faults into which they fell, the true glory of our Commonwealth may be traced to its Christian standing. It was this that gave sacredness and dignity to the magistracy, upholding it in honor in the hearts of the people, and securing it from those mutations which are so injurious to the steady and healthful growth of any country. It was such principles that made Theophilus Eaton to be the admiration of all spectators, for 'the discretion, the gravity, the equity with which he managed all public affairs;' and that elevated him to the Chief Magistracy of the colony of New Haven, by the free suffrages of her citizens, for twenty successive years. It was the reverent recognition of God in civil and domestic as well as ecclesiastical institutions, that secured such subordination in the family and the State, and made the whole atmosphere of society so pure and healthful. There were evils enough—strifes and dissensions numberless; but, withal, there was a toughness of moral life, an unbending integrity, and a high resolve, which carried the State safely through all its perils.‡ Those were not faultless times, but they were times of faith; God's government was an awful reality by which men sought to shape their earthly life, every region of which (though with many spots of partial obscuration) was illumined by the light that shineth from above. Give me the stern and ragged cliffs, in the clefts of which many a stately tree is nourished, and out of which many a flower of sweetest fragrancy doth spring; and keep to yourselves, ye despisers of our past, the yielding, treacherous quicksands in which nothing can take root. Austere principles are better than none.

"In the great revolution which immediately followed the retirement of Governor Smith, and of which his rejection was the first wave, Connecticut abdicated her Christian standing. The ancient spirit which had shaped her institutions and linked her, in her corporate capacity, to the throne of the Almighty for almost two hundred years, was then expelled; and the State ceased henceforward to wield power as a religious trust. New and alien principles obtained the ascendency, and the divine life, imbreathed into the Commonwealth by its godly founders, was no longer the controlling law. The multiplication of Christian sects undoubtedly rendered a strict adherence to the original constitution both unwise and impossible, but could not justify such a total departure from the old foundations. Schisms in the church can never necessitate the apostacy of the State. If the truth and institutions of God exist in fragments they should be honored as fragments, and not cast aside as rubbish. But the few remaining usages of a religious character yet retained by our Government, are felt to be incongruous with the spirit of the age, are barely tolerated as lifeless forms, and will soon be swept away.

"It was the honor of Governor Smith to close worthily the long line of Chief Magistrates in whom the principles of the former era were represented, and to shed around the last days of the old Commonwealth the lustre it had in the times of Haynes, and Winthrop, and Saltonstall. His State papers breathe the spirit of religious reverence and faith; he speaks in them as a Christian ruler, the head and organ of a Christian people, unfolding the dealings of Almighty God, and summoning them to acts of lowly worship at his feet. With his administration the golden age of Connecticut came to an end."

The most striking facts of his character are summed up by his biographer in a passage which, though long, offers so fine an image of the man of a better era that we cannot withhold it from our readers:

"But the portraiture of Governor Smith's character will be incomplete without giving greater prominence to the element of the *Christian gentleman*. He was an eminent ornament of a class of which very few survive, commonly spoken of as gentlemen of the old school. This is commonly understood to designate a lofty tone of manners which belonged to a state of society now gone by, and the loss of which is as little to be regretted as the obsolete fashions of our grandsires' coats. The free-and-easy spirit of our age rejoices in its deliverance from the uncomfortable restraints of those punctilious times, and ridicules the antique forms of social and public life. But manners are shaped by principles. They are the expression of the sentiments, of the moral and spiritual character of men; and when these are debased they will stamp their meanness on the manners also. Outward coarseness and vulgarity are a fruit and an index of moral debasement; and the stately and beautiful forms of life are the fit embodiment of high and honorable feelings, though they may be the decorated sepulchre which hides the corruption of death.

"The loftier manners of past ages grew out of their loftier principles. The life of man was felt to be encompassed by a heavenly presence and illumined by a heavenly light. Society was a Divine structure, and office-bearers therein were the representatives and ministers of God. Hence a reverential spirit, and its outward expression, a respectful manner, grew out of the faith of men in the invisible as symbolized in the visible, in the eternal as symbolized in the temporal. In the father they saw set forth the everlasting fatherhood of God; in the ruler the majesty of the great King. Admiration of the person was a distinct thing altogether from reverence for the office-bearer; the individual properties of the stone were not confounded with the powers given it by its place in the arch.

"The effect on the manners of society of thus *recognising God in men—his ordinances*—was strong and wholesome. Power was a sacred trust to be accounted for to him for whom it was held; and this, while it gave elevation to the character and loftiness to the aims, laid strong bonds upon pride, and tempered authority with gentleness and mercy. And so, on the other hand, submission and reverence were dignified, because they were rendered to God—to God represented in man—for there is nothing slavish in honoring him. There is a profound truth hid under Burke's paradox, where he speaks of the 'proud submission and dignified obedience' of the days of chivalry. No other principle can take from authority its arrogance and free respectfulness from servility. The increasing debasement of our manners springs from the decay of reverence, and this, again, from losing sight of the Divine element in the structure of society, and degrading it into a mere earthly mechanism. No man can revere his own workmanship; and it should excite no surprise that 'the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable,' since the magistracy are no longer regarded as the ministers of Jehovah, but as the delegates and tools of the populace. No wonder that through all the spheres of life this change should be seen; that all intercourse should contract defilement; that the ancient majesty should be disappearing from the bench and from the chair of state; for link after link is severing of that celestial chain which once encompassed the earth, and lifted it within the outskirts of the glory of the eternal throne.

"The manners of Governor Smith were formed under the control of other principles, and in another atmosphere. He was trained from childhood to revere and to obey; life, in the forms in which it was developed around him, was full of sacredness, and thus the groundwork was laid of that gentlemanly character, that union of courtesy and suavity with a princely bearing, for which he was so eminently distinguished. None who ever enjoyed the privilege of his acquaintance can forget the charm of his deportment, the self-possession and dignity which the presence of a monarch could not have shaken, joined to a kindness and affability that put the humblest at his ease.

"Nor must I omit to speak of his position in society after his retirement from office, which was a realizing of the ideal of *a country gentleman*, and an illustration of the strong and healthful influence which rank and wealth, and the accomplishments of learning and manners, joined to ancestral ties, may exert upon a people. Elevated above all around him by the official honors he had so nobly worn; possessed of an ample estate, which enabled him to live in the style of dignified simplicity suited to his station, and which was the fit decoration and instrument of his majestic character; and standing among his townsmen, not as a *novus homo*, but as the scion of an honored stock that, for more than half a century, had struck its roots deep in their soil, and thus invested with strong hereditary claims upon their affections, he entered on the last great period of his life one of the οἱ ἄριστοι, a recognised guide and leader of men.* And seldom are such gifts and instruments of usefulness turned to nobler account. He was a fountain of purifying and ennobling influences. All loved and revered him; and well is it for men when they can find worthy objects to love and revere. Vice stood abashed, and insolence rebuked in his presence; the tone of manners and of morals was elevated by his example; and his generous and public-spirited disposition made him prominent in every useful and merciful work. He might almost appropriate the beautiful picture drawn by the Eastern patriarch of himself while "the Almighty was yet with him." "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my rest in the street, the young men saw me and hid themselves, and the aged rose and stood up. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.'

"In this, also, he was one of the last survivors of a once numerous class. The time has been when almost every village had its *optimates*, its guiding lights and centres of influence, men whose descent from ancient and venerated families gave them a hold upon the hearts of their townsmen, and in whom education and wealth were felt to furnish additional claims to official and social eminence. Then honors were heaped upon the worthy in long succession, who became thereby perennial fountains of blessing: the spirit of envy and the principle of rotation had not yet converted society into a sand waste. But all is changed now, or changing; social distinctions can be no longer tolerated; the staff of the tyrannic populace strikes at the tallest flowers, and it is becoming as impossible to maintain a *position* amid the heaving mass as out of the waves of the ocean to build an enduring arch. How refreshing to look back upon the better time, when guidance was welcomed as a blessing, and the gifts of God were not systematically perverted into instruments of detraction! No diffusion of knowledge, no systems of benevolent working, can ever supply to New England the loss of that class of which Governor Smith was an eminent representative, the πρεσβυτεροι of society."

* He died on the 7th December, 1845.

* Connecticut and New Haven were distinct colonies until 1665, when, happily for both, they were united under the name of Connecticut.

† Throughout all Christendom, since the conversion of Constantine, the church and the State have encroached each on the other's province. The one has usurped the functions of earthly rule; the other those of spiritual ministry. It is hard to say which has been the greater loser; for if the Pope has freed himself from that civil subjection under which he *ought* to have remained, the King, in many lands—at times in every land—has intruded himself into the work of the Priest, and dared to dictate, both in doctrine and worship. Of the three alternatives, movement in harmony, mutual interference, and entire divorce, Christendom is now choosing the last and worst.

‡ I cannot resist the temptation of giving one or two extracts from John Winthrop, the first Governor of that name of Massachusetts, to show how unlike the liberty for which our father's contended is to the liberalism of the present day:

"The questions that have troubled the country have been about the authority of the magistracy and the liberty of the people. It is you who have called us to this office; but, being thus called, we have our authority from God; it is the ordinance of God, and it hath the image of God stamped upon it; and the contempt of it has been vindicated by God with terrible examples of his vengeance.

"Nor would I have you to mistake in the point of your own liberty. There is a liberty of corrupt nature, which is affected both by men and beasts, do what they list; and this liberty is inconsistent with authority, impatient of all restraint; by this liberty *sumus omnes deteriores*; it is the grand enemy of truth and peace, and all the ordinances of God are bent against it. But there is a civil, a moral, a federal liberty, which is the proper end and object of authority; it is a liberty for that only which is just and good; for this liberty you are to stand with the hazard of your very lives; and whatsoever crosses it is not authority, but a distemper thereof. This liberty is maintained in a way of subjection to authority; and the authority set over you will, in all administrations for your good, be quietly submitted unto by such as have a disposition to shake off the yoke and lose their true liberty, by their murmuring at the honor and power of authority."

* His dwelling had a nobility about it in harmony with the man. Its position was one of almost unequalled beauty, near the western base of that range of hills which separates much of the rugged country of Litchfield from the gentle slopes of Dutchess, and overlooking a landscape of considerable extent and great rural loveliness. And then the old stone mansion itself, with its spacious and lofty piazza, its battlemented roof, its regal look—it was a fit abode for one

"Whose soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

THE NAVAL DETACHMENT AT TABASCO.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

Extract of a letter from an Officer on board the Steamer Spitfire, July 25.

"Since I last wrote a multitude of events have transpired, so varied in their character as to seem more like startling phantasies of disturbed rest, or the fruit of a fevered brain, than realities, the remembrance of which time cannot efface. A hero of five hundred battles could not be more enthusiastic as he boasted of his feats than your humble servant as he narrated in simple words the part he took in the rencounters with the Mexicans. The Commodore, on leaving Tabasco, left behind as guard ships the Spitfire, Ætna, and Scourge, to retain possession of the almost deserted city, surrounded by Mexican soldiery, who were only awaiting the absence of the Commodore and the majority of his force to fire at us from every building. Our position was critical; we could muster from the two steamers and the bomb brig about one hundred effective men; these with the marines making 175 men, were a small guard for so extended a city: hence we must confine our sentries to one quarter; this was the main plaza. In this square the marines quartered, together with a daily detachment of sailors from the vessels to work the three field-pieces stationed in the plaza. This force was sufficient indeed to repel the enemy in case of a direct attack, but wholly inefficient to keep them at such a distance as to secure the safety of the citizens (not being within hail of our sentries) from the brutal insults and robberies of a prowling Mexican soldiery, ready so soon as the shades of eve prevailed to repeat their nocturnal pursuits. The effect of this policy became apparent so soon as the Commodore was hull down with his forces. Those citizens who had remained to receive our protection now lost confidence, and even the priests joined in the rush to get off. This was not very complimentary to us, but we knew our strength, and, though it was small, we were determined to defend the city at all hazards. As we confined our land force to the plaza, we trained our great guns aboard ship so as to rake the suburbs of the city with shell. At 4 o'clock every day we landed and drilled the sailors as musketeers and carbineers. I was appointed as lieutenant of a party of twelve of the former. Now, that we had no steam on, I became a 'combatant' by volunteering. On the third night after the Commodore had departed, about 12 o'clock, whilst all was still and the new moon cast a glimmering light through the solitary ruins which surrounds the plaza, the sentinel on post nearest to the ruins of the house where Sentmanat was crucified, discovered numerous slow-moving objects which appeared to him to be animals of some unknown description which he had not as yet seen in this strange land. These animals had already filled the old ruin and were arranging themselves. The sentinel challenged, but, receiving no reply, he fired his musket and fled to the guardhouse: immediately our tars were at their field-pieces, and, ere the sneaking enemy had time to make a rush upon us, a shower of grape changed their direction, and in total confusion they disappeared in the bushes which skirt the ruins. Our small party made a narrow escape, for we have since learned that two hundred men advanced to surprise us in two parties, one from the northern and the other from the western side of the plaza. Had they acted in concert, and not been timely discovered, there would have been some hard fighting before we could have landed a party from the three vessels to assist.

"The night after, a sentinel was fired at by a party of eight behind a house. How he escaped it is difficult to say, for the ground was covered with mortar, knocked down by the balls, which struck within a few inches of his body. He barely fired his piece, when one of the rascals showed himself and then fell back; just as the sentinel was about to fire again they took to their heels and ran. This night I was ashore, having volunteered to serve at *one* gun—one of the 6 pounders. The sentinel from time to time would fire away down the street when a prowler could be seen: our men were in an instant at the gun, ready to rake any thing with grape and canister. I can tell you that my ardor for doing duty was somewhat abated by the time that dawn approached, having been exceedingly annoyed by musquitoes, fleas, and sandflies. We slept most of the next day to make up for it. However, at 4 o'clock, 34 of the '*Spitfirers*' found themselves upon '*terra firma*' in their 'best clothes,' with eight or ten rounds of blank cartridges, besides some few ball cartridges. We had rigged up a pretty flag upon a boarding pike and '*drummed up*' a drum and fife, determined to out drill all the rest of the '*army of invasion*' in the plaza. Well, after performing various evolutions within the plaza, our captain concluded to give us a little exercise in marching about town and displaying his little force, thereby gradually accustoming the men to any active duty they might be called upon to perform. After marching down a street we halted, when the carbineers were deployed to the right, being directed to meet us at a certain stated rendezvous. I was then directed to proceed ahead with two men to act as scouts. This order I received with pleasure and obeyed with alacrity, by running into the bushes which fill the gardens contiguous to this street. We had progressed about a half a mile in this way, four hundred yards ahead of the musketeers, who were hid from us by the bushes, when I suddenly came out in the main street which leads to the neighboring towns in the country. I there halted until the two men came up, and then pushed on in search of adventure. This was soon found; for we had scarcely run two hundred yards further when a bend in the road discovered to us a man standing at the corner of one of the houses which here skirt the road; thinking he was a passenger, I did not tell the men to fire; but, so soon as he saw us, he clapped his hands to his hat and disappeared at full speed. At the same time a horseman went flying up the road in the bushes. Here we halted, when the musketeers under Captain Porter came up. We then hurried on. Having proceeded a mile along the main road, we found ourselves in the country, where but a hut was now and then seen. At one of these huts we stopped, and found that it had been used as the guardhouse of the enemy. It was now thought that the men had had sufficient exercise, that they had shown abundance of spirit to meet the enemy, and, not having effective ammunition, we concluded to retrace our steps. The carbineers had not yet come up, but were leisurely marching forward. We had scarcely commencing retracing our steps when such another shower of balls came whistling past us! Our brave fellows returned this salute promptly, though no enemy was as yet apparent; all we could do was to fire in the bushes where smoke appeared. After five or six rounds from our men, they began reporting that their ball cartridges were expended, and that they were firing blank to keep up appearances. The enemy well knew this by the report of our pieces, and, encouraged by the fact, three or four came creeping out from the bushes into the road 150 yards distant. Those of our men who had a ball left now took deliberate aim, which soon caused these obstructions to disappear, one being killed and six wounded. The balls being spent, the order to fall back was reluctantly given, and we retreated in good order, until the overwhelming force of the enemy, pressing on us so closely, forced us, after retreating 400 yards, to entrench ourselves behind a reed house, intending to stop here and await their approach with fixed bayonets, when we would have made a sailor's charge and given them "*particular metre*" in the way of close action. We were breathlessly awaiting their cautious advance when three hearty cheers and a volley announced the opportune arrival of the carbineers. The enemy then gave us one raking volley, and made off in all directions through the dense chaparral. Away our tars bolted after them, but they were no match in speed for the Mexicans, who disappeared in a few minutes. We now collected our men and commenced searching for the wounded; found the Mexicans had sustained some loss. We found one man with a ball hole through both of his legs, several others had slight wounds, and one man had his musket knocked out of his hand and the stock shivered. You would have been astonished at the shower of balls these men kept up, and that their large ounce bullets did so little execution. They fired too high. I saw branches an inch in diameter cut from the orange trees over our heads. We put one poor fellow (a six and a half feet darkey) on a litter and slowly retraced our steps. We were met by several persons, coming out to see how we paraded, having heard our firing, and supposed us to be drilling. We have since learned that the enemy's force of two hundred were advancing to attack the city unawares that night, by surprising our small force in the plaza. But we advanced unexpectedly upon their picket; those two men whom we first saw, reported our advance with only thirty or forty men. They then quickly formed, one half their force in ambuscade, and sent the remainder to engage us and lead us into their trap. This would no doubt have been effected had we been well supplied with ammunition. On the evening of the 27th we again landed the "*Spitfirers*," and, having taken our field pieces in tow, and a detachment from the other vessels, we proceeded without opposition a considerable distance, when we were fired upon. Finding that the straggling houses had been occupied and used by the Mexican soldiery, we applied the torch and destroyed about two hundred houses upon the outskirts. These houses being formed mostly of reeds, thatched with cocoa boughs, soon became ignited, and their conflagration formed one of the most imposing sights ever witnessed. This immense fire fully verified Espy's theory, by evoking a tremendous storm, which burst upon us about sunset, and put an end to the desolation. We rested in quietness during that night. It soon became apparent it would be impossible to maintain this place against such odds, fatigued and worn down as we were by constant excitement and duty. Accordingly the Vixen was ordered to get under weigh and report the existing state of affairs to the Commodore, then at Frontera. Preparations to execute this order were being made, when on the morning of the 29th we were agreeably surprised to see the steamer Surprise, which had come to anchor near us in the night, from whom we learned that Capt. Bigelow had come to make a survey of the river. Capt. B. being made acquainted with our situation, immediately carried out the plan of dispatching the Vixen to Frontera, whilst the Surprise remained to fill her place. The Vixen reached Frontera in twelve hours' sail; and on the 29th she again appeared amongst us with a reinforcement of one hundred marines and tars, under the command of selected officers. All were pleased and in fine spirits. Now came the loud request of the brave to be led out to meet the enemy. The occasion was too favorable to be neglected, as the enemy were reported as being six hundred strong, full of fire, and with proclamations of 'God and Liberty,' expressing their fixed determination to bury us all in the soil of oblivion after they had boiled in oil our *cowardly* heads. It is true we valued our heads, but we valued our reputation still more; so we must, in order to transmit the latter, preserve the former, as the glory to be gained in our conflicts with these people is in proportion, not to our individual valor but to individual caution; as it is a rare thing to see a Mexican—an impossibility to get near enough to become personal.

"On July 1st all was activity and preparation for the grand march to meet the enemy, who were concentrated in two small towns four miles distant from Tabasco. At seven o'clock we got under weigh in the following order: first, the marines, under Lieut. Slack, Lieut. Shuttleworth, and Lieut. Adams, forming a body of about ninety strong; then came the 'Spitfirers,' with their field-piece, to which two *valorous animals* were hitched—the one a small fat jack, and the other a tall rawboned *aristocratic*-looking horse. We had captured these prizes, and, after making harness for them of rope and canvass, Lieut. Porter was now turning them to account—the first dawning of 'flying artillery' in this fertile State. At two long drag-ropes in front of the steeds our men pulled in time. This was a rich scene: the donkey was quite willing, but the horse did not like his companion, so they took to quarrelling, and were on the eve of a battle, when we mounted a tar on each to keep them straight; these looked like Don Quixote and Sancho. This unfortunate couple assisted us much in the sequel, when our men were much fatigued. After us came the officers and volunteers of the Scorpion, Etna, and Scourge. We numbered about two hundred fighting men, and formed an imposing procession; as for a regular column, that was totally impossible, as the men were grumbling, as usual, who should 'go first.' But they all did well, and kept in bounds. At 11 o'clock we reached the first village, called Atasta. Here we found no enemy, except one poor fellow, who was found hid away in the corner of a house, with a bayonet stuck in a pole, he feigning to be crazy. We obtained no information of him respecting the whereabouts of the enemy. Indeed, we did not care much about information, for we were ready to meet any number of Mexicans, in any position. The village was quiet; not a soul could be seen. The solitary building of masonry, a pretty white church, was closed, and upon its huge and massive doors we placed our pronunciamento of peace to all those of this village so inclined, and who would show it by coming into Tabasco and bringing their produce to sell. This village numbers seven hundred inhabitants, who occupy themselves in procuring cocoa, chocolate, coffee, &c. for exportation through Tabasco. It is prettily situated, and formed of thatched cane houses. We soon began to abate in our sanguine expectations of meeting the enemy, and a broiling sun greatly contributed to vex us. However, we must needs invest the next village, a mile distant, and shut out from our view by a high hill, over which the road ran. After a halt of a few minutes near the church, our 'naval army' again started, and, having passed a little bridge over a marsh, commenced ascending the hill. I was leisurely walking beside our gun, at which the steeds and men were tugging, (the advance were already on the summit,) when whiz, whiz, whiz went a volley of musketry, and sharp firing in quick succession. A loud shout followed from our men, and a heavy fire from the advance told us that the enemy '*war thar*.' Now, such a rush as our men made with the field-pieces is not to be often seen. The old donkey, true to his country, laid back, and that '*tall hoss*' would not advance a step; but it was no use; the tars fairly jerked them off their feet, and they were *transported* into action. So soon as we reached the top of the hill we unlimbered, and left the beasts with the limber behind, whilst the men rushed onward with the field-piece. All this time the enemy were pouring into us a galling fire from the bushes on either side of the road, into which they had retreated after delivering their first fire and receiving a volley from us. We now steadily advanced in order, the marines being on the right, the two field-pieces in the centre, and sailors as skirmishers on the extreme left, whilst the pioneers pushed forward in the bushes on either flank. The first two well-directed fires from our field-pieces, with grape, seemed to strike a panic amongst our '*brave*' enemy, for they were seen to commence running on the extreme right in the bushes. At this moment one of the men at the Spitfire's field-piece was instantly killed within two feet of where I was standing, and several were wounded. Now, it would have done you good to have seen the way the Spitfire gun talked and flew round; for you must know our blood was up to fever height. The Mexicans continued their fire until three simultaneous cheers from all our party frightened them so that they all took to their heels and away they flew; away went the grape-shot after them, and away went our tars after the whole. This was truly an exciting scene. The men cast loose, we could not keep them in, and, of course, getting in between us and the "*Senor Soldados*," we could no longer fire without disturbing our own men. It was a great race; but it would have taken the fleetest of Arabia to have caught a Mexican at that time. Our tars, in order to overhaul the enemy, actually threw overboard as they ran all their arms and equipments, which we picked up as we followed in double quick time; but it was no use—"old Jack" gave out—when we gathered them all up like so many schoolboys, made them tumble into ranks again, with many censures for their want of self-government. They expressed great sorrow that they "had not taken one prize." Thus ended the battle of Timulte, the enemy numbering 500 men, under Gens. Chigane and Garcia, who were totally defeated. They took good care to remove their wounded and dead. We have since heard, from reliable sources, that ten were killed and twenty-four wounded. Two of our men were killed, and six wounded; one of whom has since died. Whilst I was firing my carbine near the field-piece, I had a fine view of the whole affair, and I must say that I never saw a braver set of fellows collected. The marines fired well, whilst our men kept up a constant fire from small-arms. We marched immediately into the town, which is called Timulte. The church much resembles that of Atastre's. It appeared more prosperous; numbering one hundred inhabitants. The massive doors of the church were wide open, and people with arms ran out of it as we entered the town. On occupying the town, we found it partially inhabited by twenty or thirty poor families, (or rather the female portion of them,) who were almost frightened to death. We soon pacified these poor souls, when, by means of those who spoke their language, they told us that five or six hundred troops had been quartered there on them; that they beat the poor Indians unmercifully, and forced the women to pound corn, and procure other food for their maintenance; had made them believe that our forces were cannibals, and would kill every man, woman, and child we could find; that they could not have any intercourse with Tabasco since our arrival, as the Mexican military were piquetted in every pass, and forbade all intercourse, as they said, to starve us away. The church is one large hall, with a partition of frame, covered with all kinds of scenes; the floor was paved with excellent brick, which is manufactured in this State. A guard was placed over the church, and not an article was allowed to be touched. We placed our slain in the church, until their comrades had dug a grave for them in the yard, when we all attended with solemn silence their interment, placing a cross over their heads to protect their bodies from molestation. We now commenced searching for arms and ammunition. The inhabitants, believing that the Mexican soldiery had gone to cut us to pieces, neglected to remove their furniture, and close their houses, little dreaming that our small force of 200 would cause such a race to come off through their town. Several stand of arms were found, also a box containing 600 or 700 cartridges, which we destroyed. All the muskets that we have taken from them, with few exceptions, are of British manufacture, and bear the old tower stamp; they carry ounce bullets, and are dangerous tools at two miles distance. There are also many escopets, which are nothing more than these Tower muskets sawed off, to make them handy for cavalry exercise. Copper being more plentiful here than iron or lead, that metal is substituted in many places. We had previously taken the last field pieces left in the State of Tabasco, so we had no fear of having any more copper grape sent at us. The furniture of many of the houses was '*a la mode*,' and must have cost considerable, being made of rosewood and mahogany, and of American manufacture. Mahogany is used here for firewood and general purposes. Orange and lemon wood is used, and makes very pretty furniture. We had arrived in town at 11 o'clock; meanwhile the Scourge and Vixen had gotten under weigh, and were proceeding up the river to co-operate with us, as Timulte lies quite near the water. On account of the rapid current, and having no pilot who was acquainted with the river for vessels of their draught, they did not reach the town until after we had left. We arrived at Tabasco at sunset, with colors flying and music playing the tune of Yankee Doodle. Our wounded were cheerfully borne along by their messmates with great care. The steamer did not arrive until next day, having grounded whilst coming down. Tabasco now remained quiet for three days, we hearing of no force in the vicinity, but the guerrilla party under Bruno, who were afraid to come near us, but nightly infested the suburbs of the city, breaking open houses and firing shot at the sentinels.

"By this time I had begun to like the place; the beautiful birds, flowers, and insects which filled the suburbs of the city were superlative attractions, and from which no enemy could part me. A short time since I received one lesson which forced me to confine myself within limits, and it was almost a miracle how I escaped a party in ambush, who, pagan-like, had no respect for my passion. This has vexed me, and I have vowed to act the crusader on these people, who crush every holy emotion. Now, whilst on this subject, let me tell you that this war will benefit Mexico, as regards Christianity. The result will prove that our conquest of this country has done for it what Napoleon did for Europe. We made a trip to Timulte in our steamer Spitfire, found it completely deserted. On returning we ran on a sandbar, where we remained two days, when we dispatched our small boat to Tabasco, notifying of our situation. The Scourge was sent to our relief, but we were afloat when she hove in sight. Our small boat returned with the Scourge, and brought a dear sweet letter-bag, from which I received several packages. These letters were like oil upon wounds; and, far in the interior of an enemy's country, surrounded by the most beautiful scenery, the most exquisite specimens of nature, upon a deep and powerful stream, and within the protecting guards of our fighting little Spitfire, were my letters unsealed, read and re-read. Now that the force had increased, the Commodore thought it advisable that we should evacuate Tabasco for the present. The morning of the 22d had scarcely dawned when all was business and activity. Crowds of people were bundling up their moveables, and flying again from a place which they said would be again infested with hordes of ragged starved soldiery so soon as we were out of sight. Many families sought and readily obtained our protection and a passage to Frontera. At 10 o'clock we were all ready to move; all had embarked—men, women, and children—all happy and cheerful, occupying our large lighters in tow. The marines hauled down our dearly beloved flag in the plaza, and, to the tunes of 'Yankee Doodle' and 'Hail Columbia,' evacuated the place. Now could be seen the flags of different nations streaming in the breeze, as if asking protection, whilst the waving white handkerchiefs and 'adios' of the pretty senoritas from the balconies and elevated places made us loth to part. On our arrival at Frontera, the Commodore on board the 'Great Mogul' set sail for Vera Cruz, followed by all the squadron. The Spitfire has seen so much service that her bottom must be a perfect colander. Captain Taylor with his submarine apparatus endeavored to examine her bottom whilst we lay at Tabasco, but the rapidity of the river would not allow him to effect his purpose. Lieut. Porter has obtained leave to return home—Lieut. Chauncey will supply his place on board our steamer.